

Gazette Supplement



Encaenia 2015

Congregation

24 June

1 Conferment of Honorary Degrees

The Public Orator made the following speeches in presenting the recipients of Honorary Degrees at the Encaenia held in the Sheldonian Theatre on Wednesday, 24 June:

Degree of Doctor of Letters

PROFESSOR SIR RICHARD EVANS

Historian

Qui dicunt doctos turres eburneas habitare, credere solent eos de laboribus atque aerumnis hominum parvum vel nihil scire; at si revera sedem editam et sapientia munitam occupant, immensitatem campi multis locis vastatam et cadaveribus sparsam despectant. Sic honorandorum hodie agmen ducit vir qui licet lucos academiae colat atrocia scelera et dolorem fere infinitum contueri non recusavit. Ubi primum studio rerum Germanicarum quo tempore regnabant Caesares incumbat, non ut plerique de eis scripsit qui maxima dignitate et potestate fruebantur; nam libros de peste de pauperibus de poena capitali exaravit, calamo tam acuto usus ut vel doctissimi faterentur se res Germanicas tamquam novis oculis iam videre. At dum eruditus instruit, non neglegit vulgus: intentione enim ab undevicesimo saeculo ad vicesimum conversa, de Tertio illo Imperio ausus est ut Cornelius Nepos, Catulli amicus, de rebus Italarum

*omne aevum tribus explicare cartis
doctis, Iuppiter, et laboriosis.*

Magna est materiei moles, tristis narratio; tamen lectorem per labyrinthum certis vestigiis ducit. Flagitia ostendit atque ineptias, et si de rebus tam diris ridere licet, aliquando risum movet. Non solum veritatem quaesivit sed etiam cum veritatis

inimicis pro virili parte contendit: ita cum David quidam perversus non monstrum necare sed eos qui monstruosa illius tyrannidis scelera ostenderant suppressere conaretur, errores eius manifestos reddidit, in foro quinque dies luctatus est, victoriam haud dubiam reportavit. Libellum quoque ad historiam defendendam edidit, sane eloquentem et sapientia refertum; quam tamen exemplum omnibus eius scriptis praebitum forsitan vel melius approbet.

Praesento rerum Germanicarum investigatorem indefessum, Ricardum Iohannem Evans, equitem auratum, Academiae Britannicae socium, apud Universitatem Cantabrigiensem quondam historiae Professorem Regium et adhuc Collegii Wolfsoniani Praesidem, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris.

Admission by the Chancellor

Rerum gestarum explicator tenax sagax strenue, qui in loca tenebricosissima penetravisti, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris honoris causa.

Paraphrase

Those who say that professors live in an ivory tower are in the habit of thinking that they know little or nothing about the toils and troubles of ordinary people; but if they do indeed dwell in a high place, secured by wisdom, the reality is that they look down from it upon an immense area much of which is ravaged and strewn with corpses. And thus the line of honorands today is led by a man who, though he may haunt the groves of the academy, has been willing to fix his gaze upon appalling crimes and well nigh limitless suffering. When he first settled to the study of German history in the Wilhelmine era, he did not, as many have done, write about those who enjoyed the

greatest power and eminence; instead, his books dealt with cholera, poverty and capital punishment, and they were written with so sharp a pen that even the experts admitted that they were now seeing the German past with new eyes. But while educating the learned, he did not neglect a wider public: turning his attention from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, he wrote an account of the Third Reich, in which, as Catullus' friend Cornelius Nepos did in his study of Italy, he dared to write

*Three volumes' worth of history:
What learning, gosh, what industry.*

Great is the mass of evidence, the tale grim, but he leads the reader through the labyrinth with a sure step. His tale is of wickedness and folly, with touches of mockery (if one may be allowed to smile about such dreadful things). He has not only sought the truth but struggled manfully against its enemies: when a perverse David was trying not to slay a monster but to gag those who set forth the monstrous crimes of that tyranny, he exposed the man's errors, wrestled with him through five days of cross-examination in court, and won a decisive victory. He has also published a short book *In Defence of History*, but wise and persuasive though it is, one may feel that the best defence comes from the example that his own work has set.

I present Sir Richard John Evans, FBA, Regius Professor of History emeritus and now President of Wolfson College in the University of Cambridge, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Admission by the Chancellor

Shrewd, tenacious and vigorous interpreter of the past, who have travelled to the darkest places, on my own authority and that of the whole University I admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

DAME HILARY MANTEL*Author*

Sunt inter fabularum commenticiarum scriptores qui exemplaribus fere innumeris venditis lucrum magnum sibi parent, tamen a litteratis respuantur. Alii palmis et cultiorum plausu celebrantur; quos negligit vulgus. Rarius fabulatorem invenire possis cuius opera, ut huius feminae nunc a me productae, simul et populus cognoscit et admirantur litterarum existimatores. In comitatu Derbensi nascitur, in Cestrensi educatur, in Eboracensi iurisprudentiae studet; tum fit curatrix socialis et puerorum magistra; annos non paucos Africam et Arabiam incolit. Haud igitur mirum magnam varietatem in libris eius existere: modo per plateas Ieddae vagatur, modo Londini in deversorio cum puellis litterarum studiosis habitat, modo trans mare currit et caelo mutato in Africa Australi per compita vici cuiusdam inopis pererrat. Non solum ad longinquas nationes sed etiam ad aetates a nostra remotas peregrinatur; exempli gratia, de hominibus locum securiorem quaerentibus dum civitas Francogallorum novis rebus et seditione perturbatur magnum scribit volumen. Et quis nescit eam in aulam luporum penetrare et corpora ex obscuritate sublevare? Perdifficile est orationem hominibus antiquis attribuere quae nec sit putida nec nimis saecula recentiora sapiat; facilius de rebus nostri temporis sermone Ciceroniano contionareris. Quod tamen haec mira peritia efficit. φαντασίαν eius vix opus est ut laudem; laudemus potius artem et doctrinam qua aetatem diu praeteritam accuratissime repraesentat. Dicit unus inter scriptores historiarum apud nos Oxonienses doctissimos: 'Hic est ea Anglia quam regebat Henricus; hanc agnosco.' Et nos opici magistram eminentissimam agnoscimus.

Praesento praesentem divam, cuius potestate homines vetusti in nostra aetate reviviscunt, Hilariam Mariam Mantel, Excellentissimi Ordinis Imperii Britannici Dominam Commendatricem, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris.

Admission by the Chancellor

Fabularum tatrix ingeniosissima, quae multas per gentes et multa per saecula vecta es, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris honoris causa.

Paraphrase

Among novelists are some who sell their books in huge numbers and earn great wealth, yet are disdained by the literati. Others win prizes and the applause of the cognoscenti, while the general public

passes them by. It is less common to come upon a writer whose works, like those of the lady whom I now introduce, receive the admiration of general readers and reviewers alike. She is born in Derbyshire, schooled in Cheshire, and studies law in Yorkshire; then she becomes a teacher and social worker; she lives for a number of years in Africa and Arabia. No wonder then that her books display great variety: now she passes along the streets of Jeddah, now she occupies a women's hostel in London with other students, now she speeds across the sea and with *A Change of Climate* roams through the tangle of an impoverished South African township. She is a time traveller too, visiting not only distant nations but also epochs remote from our own; she writes a big work, for example, about men and women seeking *A Place of Greater Safety* amid the disturbances of the French Revolution. And who does not know that she makes her way into *Wolf Hall* and manages to *Bring Up the Bodies*? It is very hard to put words into the mouths of people from an earlier age without either sounding affected or conveying too much of a modern flavour – one might as well try to speechify about contemporary matters in classical Latin – but she carries off the trick with amazing aplomb. There is little need for me to praise her imaginative power; let us rather praise that combination of artistry and research which has enabled her to represent an era long gone with such accuracy. One of our own most distinguished historians observes, 'This is the Tudor England that I recognise.' And we laymen too recognise a consummate master of her craft.

I present a 'goddess present', by whose power the men of yore come to life again in our own time, Dame Hilary Mary Mantel, DBE, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Admission by the Chancellor

Imaginative weaver of tales, who have travelled across many lands and through many centuries, on my own authority and that of the whole University I admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

PROFESSOR RUTH SIMMONS*Former President, Brown University*

Forsitan non sit necesse ut universitates habeamus: sine universitatibus Graeci philosophiam creare, surgentia sidera dicere, magnitudinem orbis terrarum metiri poterant. Universitates primum in medio aevo et in Europa sunt institutae: aliae gentes in aliis orbis partibus aliter et rerum causis studere noverunt et doctrinam iuvenibus tradiderunt. At

cum sint universitates, oportet eas bene gubernari; quamobrem nos iuvat feminam hodie honestare quam hac arte praestitisse constat. Coloni filia, in agro Texano nata, primum in Louisiana tum Cantabrigiae Massachusettensium in Universitate Harvardiana educata est. Litterarum Francogallicarum professor facta, iam iuvenis rerum administrationis peritiam haud parvam exhibebat; itaque non mirum eam in anno XL aetatis suae praesidem Collegii Smithiani creatam esse. Scholam ingeniariae, id quod nullo in collegio puellis educandis constituto antea exstiterat, ibi condidit. Tum Providentiam translata, prima hominum a stirpe Africana exortorum electa est quae universitati ex iis quae hederosae vocantur praesideret. Credit veritatem semper consecrandam esse, etiamsi pudorem afferat; itaque quaestionem de opibus universitatis haberi iussit ad iudicandum quantum e lucro mangonico fluxisset. Simul ea duce arcae novis opibus maxime auctae sunt, novaeque societates cum externis gentibus iunctae; quare per eam magna parte stat ut motus Browniani semper in altiora tendant.

Praesento duce fortem sagacem providam, Ruth Iohannam Simmons, Academiae Americanae Artium et Scientiarum Sociam, Universitatis Brownianae quondam Praesidem et adhuc rerum Africanarum professorem, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris.

Admission by the Chancellor

Discentium et doctorum gubernatrix prudens et strenua, cuius exemplo animi multarum confirmantur, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris honoris causa.

Paraphrase

Perhaps we do not need to have universities: the Greeks managed without universities to invent philosophy, 'tell the rising of the stars', and measure the circumference of the earth. It was in the Europe of the Middle Ages that these institutions were first established: other peoples in other parts of the world found different ways to conduct research and educate the young. But since universities exist, it is a good idea for them to be well led, and so it is our pleasure today to honour a lady who is agreed to excel at this exercise. Born a sharecropper's daughter in Texas, she was educated in Louisiana and then in Cambridge, Massachusetts, at Harvard. She became a professor of French literature, but early in her career already showed a notable talent for administration; it is no surprise, then,

that she was appointed President of Smith College in her fortieth year. There she set up an engineering school, the first in a women's university. Her move to Providence made her the first person of African ancestry to head a university belonging to the Ivy League. She believes that the truth should always be pursued, however uncomfortable the outcome, and accordingly ordered an enquiry into the origins of her university's wealth in the profits of slavery. Meanwhile her presidency also saw a very great increase in its endowment, and the established of new links with countries overseas; she has played a large part, indeed, in ensuring that Brownian motion should always extend in an upwards direction.

I present a vigorous, wise and far-sighted leader, Ruth Jean Simmons, Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, former President of Brown University, where she remains Professor of Comparative Literature and Africana Studies, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Admission by the Chancellor

Prudent and vigorous director of learners and the learned, by whose example many women have been inspired, on my own authority and that of the whole University I admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Doctor of Science

PROFESSOR WALLACE BROECKER
Geologist

Primum opus Adamo in paradiso erat cuncta animantia nominare; Adami filium nunc produco qui nomina dare amat quibus homines eruditos atque honore dignos notet; ita de coriis Henricianis et de eventibus Oeschgerianis commentarios exaravit. Dicitur praeterea primus eis verbis uti quibus nunc ubique utuntur docti de terra vel caelo calescente disputantes. Si nihil hucusque nomen ipsius habet, causa est eum tot res repperisse ut laudatores e magna illa copia unam eligere nequeant. Adhuc iuvenis monstravit se isotopos exacte scrutatum intelligere posse quando tempestates ante multa saecula mutaverint, quomodo eae a motu orbis terrarum solem circumeuntis gubernentur, quare maris altitudo et glaciei densitas longo spatio variaverint. Necnon ostendit in partibus septentrionalibus maris Atlantici aequor ad profundum descendere, tum postquam per mare Indicum et Pacificum fluxerit rursus exurgens ad originem redire; quem aestum, obscurum sane et immensum, cingulo mobili circum orbem terrarum currenti comparavit. Adfirmat tempestates

ferae cuidam iratae esse similes. Scilicet nemo tam superbus est ut eam se ex toto domare posse credat; hic tamen modos indicavit quibus pericula super omne genus humanum nostra aetate imminetia saltem mitigentur. 'Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,' inquit Vergilius; felicior qui ex illis causis quae sint eventura potest colligere. Multi sane scientia naturali periti civibus suis sunt usui; utilissimus qui ad vivos et postgenitos a clade servandos pro virili parte contendit.

Virum praesento cuius opera et nobis ipsis et nepotibus nostris est maximi momenti, Wallace Smith Broecker, in facultate scientiae terrena apud Universitatem Columbianam geologiae professorem, praemio Balzaniano multisque aliis praemiis nobilitatum, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia.

Admission by the Chancellor

Naturae investigator sagacissime, cuius studia terram mare aërem comprehendunt, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia honoris causa.

Paraphrase

Adam's first task in the Garden of Eden was to name all living beings; I now present a son of Adam who loves to name things after the scientists whom he respects; accordingly, he has written about Heinrich Layers and Dansgaard Oeschger Events. He is also credited with coining the term 'global warming', now in use universally. If nothing yet bears his own name, the reason is that he has made so many discoveries that his admirers are at a loss how to pick one out of such an abundance. Early in his career he discovered how isotopes could be used to date distant climate events, to understand how the earth's orbit controls climate, and to learn the reasons for variations in sea level and the thickness of ice sheets over time. He has also shown how the surface water in the north Atlantic sinks and travels in the deep ocean through the Indian Ocean and the Pacific before rising again and returning to its starting-point. He has likened this vast and hidden current to a 'conveyor' circling the globe. He describes the climate as an 'angry beast'; and while no one, for sure, is arrogant enough to suppose the beast can be completely tamed, he has proposed means by which the dangers that in our day now loom over the entire human race can at least be mitigated. 'Happy he who has understood the causes of things,' says Virgil; but happier the man who can deduce from these causes what the future holds. Many scientists indeed do work of public benefit,

but an especially great benefit is given by one who is striving to save the present generation and posterity from catastrophe.

I present a man whose labours are of the highest importance to ourselves and our descendants alike, Wallace Smith Broecker, Newberry Professor of Geology in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at Columbia University, winner of the Balzan Prize and many other awards, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Admission by the Chancellor

Wise investigator of nature, whose studies embrace earth, sea and air, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

PROFESSOR DAME ANN DOWLING
Engineer

Mos est hominum gaudium ardorem admirationem fremitu et clamoribus ostendere; porro anglico sermone, si quis multum potestatis vel gloriae adeptus est, eum magnum strepitum creavisse aliquando dicimus. Musca autem secundum fabellam satis notam cum in rota currus sedisset, 'Ecce potentissimum animal,' inquit. 'Quantum pulveris commoveo, quantum strepitum.' Hic tamen adest femina quae laudes nostras meruit quia sonum non excitaverit sed leniverit. Aëris fluentis instabilitatem et bombum metalli iterum calefacti oculatissime inquisivit; quas res etiam in hoc theatro doctissimis repleto haud scio an pauci bene intellegant. Hoc tamen est certum: etsi fieri non potest ut aeronaves omnino sileant, fremitus ille velut tonitruum propter huius feminae sollertiam atque industriam multum est minutus et simul olei minor quantitas consumitur. Propter humanitatem autem et liberalitatem ab omnibus laudatur: dicit amicus quidam eam, si consulatur, semper tempus habere; et dum singula persequatur, rem totam videre. Laquearia illa vitrea, ut dicuntur, semel et saepius perfregit: cum iuvenis Cantabrigiae educaretur, pars vix centesima eorum qui ingeniariae studebant sexus erant muliebris, e quo prima in sua universitate huius disciplinae professor et nuper prima Academiae Regiae Ingeniariae praeses facta est. Tubis et plausu honorandos in hoc theatro salutare solemus; quare maximo sonitu id silentium celebremus quod haec sua machinarum scientia nobis attulit.

Praesento tranquillitatis clarissimam auctorem, Annam Patriciam Dowling, Excellentissimi Ordinis Imperii Britannici Dominam Commendatricem, apud

Universitatem Cantabrigiensem ingeniariae professorem, Academiae Regiae Ingeniariae praesidem, Societatis Regiae sociam, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia.

Admission by the Chancellor

Machinarum investigatrix peritissima, quae exemplo tuo puellas ad ingeniariam descendam incitavisti, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia honoris causa.

Paraphrase

It is the habit of human beings to demonstrate joy, excitement and enthusiasm with din and shouting; and in our own English idiom we sometimes call someone who enjoys a great deal of fame or power a 'big noise'. In the well-known fable the fly on the chariot wheel declares, 'Look how mighty I am; what a lot of dust and noise I make.' Here, though, is a lady who has earned our praise not for stimulating sound but for mitigating it. She is an expert researcher into unsteady flow and reheat buzz - and even in this theatre stuffed with learned persons, one may wonder how many properly understand that. One thing is for sure: although it is impossible for aeroplanes to be entirely silent, thanks to her hard work and ingenuity their thunderous roar has been much lessened, and at the same time a smaller amount of oil is used up. Everyone praises her warmth and humanity: a friend says that she always has time for you, and that while she takes care of the details, she sees the big picture. She has broken through quite a number of glass ceilings: when she was a young student at Cambridge, scarcely one in a hundred of her engineering contemporaries was a woman; she was to become Cambridge's first professor of this subject and recently the Royal Academy of Engineering's first female president. Our custom is to greet the honorands in this theatre with trumpets and applause; so let us make as much noise as we can to celebrate the silencing which her knowledge of machines has brought us.

I present a loudly proclaimed creator of quietness, Dame Ann Patricia Dowling, DBE, FRS, Professor of Mechanical Engineering in the University of Cambridge, President of the Royal Academy of Engineering, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Admission by the Chancellor

Most expert researcher into machinery, who have by your example excited young women to study engineering, on my own authority and that of the whole University I admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

PROFESSOR SIR MAGDI YACoub
Cardiothoracic surgeon

Huius viri socius quidam, 'Si eum in trutina,' dicit, 'vis suspendere, inprimis te nec res gestas neque inventionem sed indolem examinare oportet.' Quae sententia forsitan necopinata videatur. Non scalpellum hic mira calliditate adhibuit? Non artem chirurgiae nova peritia novisque machinis auxit? Non permultos morbis gravissimis adflictos a leti ianua rapuit? Verum est. At ingenium eius ita constitutum est ut vis mentis ab indole separari nequeat. Tam strenuus est, tam indefessus, ut putares nullo eum somni tempore indigere; qui saepenumero totum diem in theatro suo laboravit, tum noctu vel tirones instruxit vel cum sociis de rebus medicis deliberavit. Discipuli non solum eum admirantur sed etiam amant, immo fere ut deum adorant; nam eam $\chi\alpha\rho\iota\varsigma$ exhibet quam agnoscunt omnes, nemo definire potest. Sane dicet ipse cor nihil esse nisi antliam cuius opera sanguis per corpus trahatur; atqui ego adfirmare ausim in corde eius, si aperiatur, benevolentiam nos et misericordiam esse visuros. Nam ubi egent homines, ibi est: et apud Aegyptios, gentem suam, et in Mozambicia auxilium multis attulit qui aliter longum dolorem mortemque praematuram subiissent. Aegyptus antiquissimae sapientiae est origo, sed ex Africa, ut ait Plinius, semper aliquid novi; quod testatur tota chirurgorum cohors, qui dicunt se, dum vestigia eius sequantur, semper invenire eum nonnullis gressibus iam antecessisse. Cum ad patriam redit, iam in portu aeronavium ut triumphator salutatur; nos quoque virum hodie salutemus qui tantam peritiam cum tanta virtute coniungit.

Praesento artis medendi magistrum praestantissimum, humani generis benefactorem insignissimum, Magdi Yacoub, equitem auratum, Ordini Insigniter Meritorum adscriptum, apud Collegium Imperiale Londini chirurgiae cardiothoracicae professorem, Societatis Regiae socium, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia.

Admission by the Chancellor

Scalpelli tractator dexterrime, qui tot homines tot orbis terrarum partibus adiuvisisti, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia honoris causa.

Paraphrase

A colleague of the present honorand remarks, 'If you want to weigh him up, you should start not with his invention or his achievements but with his personality.' That judgement may perhaps seem surprising. Has he not plied his scalpel with amazing skill? Has he not advanced the surgeon's art with the use of new devices and unprecedented mastery of technique? Has he not snatched many afflicted by the most serious disease from the door of death? True enough. But his nature is so constituted that his intellectual power and his character cannot be separated. So tireless and energetic is he that one might think he needed no sleep at all: many is the time that he has operated all day and then spent the night in teaching aspirant surgeons or discussing their work with his fellow researchers. His pupils not only admire and love him, but come close to adoration: he has charisma - that quality that everyone recognises and no one can pin down. No doubt he will say that the heart is merely a pump by means of which blood is drawn through the body; and yet I venture to say that if we were to cut open his own heart, we should find goodwill and compassion inside it. For where there is need, there he may be found: both among the Egyptians, his own people, and in Mozambique he has brought help to many who otherwise would have suffered long distress and premature death. Egypt is the source of the most ancient wisdom, yet from Africa, says Pliny the Elder, there is always something new; and surgeons as a body bear witness to this, saying that while they follow in his footsteps, they always find that he has already got a few paces ahead of them. When he returns to his native land, he gets a hero's welcome before he has left the airport; let us too welcome a man who combines such skill with such human qualities.

I present a supreme master of the healing art, Sir Magdi Yacoub, OM, FRS, Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery at the National Heart and Lung Institute, Imperial College London, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Admission by the Chancellor

Most dexterous wielder of the knife, who have brought help to so many people in so many parts of the world, on my own authority and that of the whole University I admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

2 Encaenia

The Public Orator delivered the following introduction to the Creweian Oration:

Public Orator: *Honoratissime Domine Cancellarie, licetne anglice loqui?*

Chancellor: *Licet.*

Public Orator:

A year ago, around exam season, the Proctors sent out a notice obviously aimed at Encaenia. It read, 'No rubbish. No glitter. No confetti.' Defying Proctorial injunction, I have been strewing my confetti on our honorands, and I have a confetto or two still to let flutter from my hand. As you sit, sir, glowing in your golden splendour, the command 'no glitter' seems like *lèse-majesté*. And as for 'no rubbish', that may be asking too much of me.

This year, as six years back, our celebration falls on Midsummer Day. As I said then, it is a day of magic, when elves and fairies dance upon the lawns with printless foot and the dons lose their usual fusty appearance, breaking out into brilliant blue and pink and red. And as I was to have observed in honouring Jessye Norman, it is also the feast of St John the Baptist, the day on which Wagner set the last act of his *Meistersinger*, the only opera to end with an honorary degree ceremony. The apprentices of Nuremberg graduate with a box on the ear – whereas here the Vice-Chancellor is content to hit the graduands on the head with a bible – and Hans Sachs is honoured for being an all-round good egg.

Today we commemorate those best of eggs, our benefactors, although at less than Wagnerian length. When actors, sportsmen or politicians win some great prize, they often say that the experience is humbling. I have never understood this. I don't feel in the least humble about the way that our benefactors so generously sustain us; I feel very proud. What I do think is that this liberality makes demands on us: to be grateful for our good fortune, to live up to the trust put in us, to be pleased that we do many things well, and to recognise that we can do some things better. The virtue of gratitude is no doubt one of those things studied at the Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics, and it is especially pleasing

to celebrate the generosity of the Uehiro Foundation on Ethics and Education on a day when its representatives are here with us in this theatre. It established the Chair in Practical Ethics thirteen years ago and our Uehiro Centre a year later. It is described as the world leader in this field, influencing political and public debate at home and abroad. No one will doubt that its work is needed. In the inspiring words of Mr Sepp Blatter, 'You can't just ask people just to behave ethically: What he needs is a visiting fellowship at the Uehiro Centre – suitably remunerated, of course. Now the study of ethics in the west began in the ancient Mediterranean world. We have had a splendid gift from the A G Leventis Foundation for the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research, the A G Leventis Graduate Scholarship in Byzantine Studies, the A G Leventis Lecturership in Eastern Christianity, the Ashmolean Curator of the Cypriot Collection, and the Institute of Human Rights.

Students, scholars, scientists, we are all here to exercise our minds, but 'mens sana in corpore sano', and all that. In March the Boat Race was fought with the usual fierce determination. We won. In fact, we won all four races, men's and women's first and second eights all coming home victorious. It was an historic event, the first time that the women's race was held on the Tideway, on the same course as the men and on the same day. This enabled the University to put first the women's crew and then the men on to our homepage for day after day, triumphing somewhat unfeelingly, one may think, over the university against which we were competing. The last varsity match was also historic: we won, and by the largest margin in the history of the competition. I ought to add that the Cambridge women's team then beat ours by an even wider margin. The matches next winter should be electric occasions.

But sport is merely mimic warfare, and this year we mark the bicentenary of one of the world's decisive battles. We won. Two hundred years and nine days ago, at the Duchess of Richmond's ball at Brussels, news came to the British commander-in-chief that Napoleon had crossed the frontier and was heading for the capital. Three days later, the Duke of Wellington, Chancellor of this university, fought the Battle of Waterloo. Why else would one of our chancellors go to Brussels, if not to crush the French? Exactly a year before the Duchess's ball, there took place perhaps the most remarkable of all ceremonies in this building, when in the presence of the Prince Regent honorary degrees were conferred on the Czar of Russia

and the King of Prussia, who then used their newly acquired powers to vote the same honour for the Duke of Wellington. That vote of confidence surely gave him the extra zing he needed to defeat Bonaparte. So maybe the Battle of Waterloo was won in the Sheldonian Theatre after all. Late in the nineteenth century an ancient don, who as a young officer had met the captive emperor on board HMS Bellerophon, was asked what he had made of him. He thought for a while and then said, 'You could tell – you could really tell – that he was not a varsity man.'

The results of the Research Excellence Framework (the REF) were announced before Christmas. We won. At least, that is our story, and by some measures it seems to be true. But before we congratulate ourselves too loudly we might wonder about the accuracy of the exercise. For one thing, there has been grade inflation: so much research is now classed as world-leading that one wonders who the world followers are. There seem to be too many chiefs and not enough persons of Native American heritage. For another thing, the REF was poorly designed and easily manipulated. I remember many years ago when there was a flurry in the press about the Cambridge spies, after the alleged unmasking of the fourth or fifth or umpteenth man, our own Regius Professor of History wrote a complacent piece in some newspaper celebrating the superior loyalty of his university. 'Why were there no Oxford spies?' he asked. He forgot the alternative: that the Oxford spies were too smart to get caught. And so with the REF: it may be that we are top in low cunning.

But of course our success has been owed to our people, and our medical researchers collect especial praise. We have had a munificent donation from the British Heart Foundation to establish the Oxbridge BHF Centre of Regenerative Medicine, and it is a particular pleasure to celebrate this on the day when we have honoured Sir Magdi Yacoub. According to the centre's director, the award 'will enable us to integrate expertise in developmental and stem cell biology, wound healing and inflammation... to identify future therapeutic targets towards mending broken hearts'. And I had thought that all you need is love. Still in the medical field, the Robertson Foundation, as well as supporting the Rothermere American Institute, has made an exceptionally splendid donation to the Big Data Institute, part of the Li Ka Shing Centre for Health Information and Discovery, the first centre of its kind in the world. And within the realm of artificial intelligence another very large benefactor is Google

DeepMind for a collaboration with the Departments of Engineering and Computer Science. One would be gratified to think that bringing deep mind to Oxford is like carrying coals to Newcastle, but apparently not so. Extraordinary results are expected from this long-term partnership.

Although tower cranes still prick the city's skyline, the scaffolding has been coming down from buildings old and new. It has gone from the Weston Library, now presenting a more welcoming face to the world and new magnificence inside, from the Blavatnik School, not quite complete but externally already the most stylish addition to the University's estate for many years, from Oriel, revealing its new penthouse floor on the Rhodes Building, and from Keble, revealing Keble - like the old London buses, always redder than one had remembered. The scaffolding at Keble was accompanied by a mystic sign reading 'Warning Cyclists in Road'. It is true that they are usually on the pavement. I was reminded of the sign on the towpath near the station that observes hopefully 'Cyclists dismount'. Oh no they don't. The Weston Library had almost as many openings as Mr Sinatra had farewell performances - in each case, with good reason. While we praise a brilliantly transformed building, we should also applaud the librarians who have carried through the transition. Librarians are trained to keep their voices down, and they have not spoken up about the stresses and strains that this huge operation must have added to an already demanding job, but we do appreciate them.

The colleges, as we know, work hard to raise money, through conferences, summer schools and development campaigns, and there are naming opportunities. Walking along the Broad last summer, I was surprised to see a banner above a familiar gateway reading 'Welcome to Royale Academy'. It used to be called Balliol. My own college at one time adopted the menacing slogan 'LMH is for life.' Unlike the Christmas puppy, at least your college won't stain your carpet. It may hope to make a hole in your wallet. Nothing matters more than our students and how we teach them. The Creat Group Corporation has made a very generous gift to establish the Oxford-Creat Group Graduate Scholarships, with the hope that these scholars will go on to help develop China's economy. Exceptional young people from many parts of the world are supported by the Oxford Weidenfeld and Hoffmann Scholarships, for which the Weidenfeld-Hoffmann Trust and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue have made grand benefactions. The institute is also

supporting the Weidenfeld Scholarship and Humanitas Visiting Professorship Programme, which is administered here by the Humanities Division and in Cambridge the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (which uses the acronym CRASSH). This has in turn inspired us to set up The Oxford Research Centre for the Humanities, or TORCH. So now we have crash and burn. TORCH has now celebrated its first anniversary, and according to the Humanities Division, it is an 'incubation space' which 'provides a vibrant framework for innovative interdisciplinary research and knowledge exchange'. When the framework gets vibrant, you had best evacuate the building.

The Oxford year is punctuated with speechifying. The Senior Proctor orates when he demits office in March; I orate in the summer; and the Vice-Chancellor's oration is a sign that autumn is drawing on. We orators stick together; so picture my surprise when the Vice-Chancellor began his most recent disquisition by criticising the content of the previous Creweian Oration. Now vigorous disagreement is the lifeblood of academic existence - a pleasure as well as a duty - but all the same I can't help asking, 'Vice-Chancellor, was this wise?' Is it the best policy to take issue with the one man who has the unfettered right of reply before a large audience nine months later? There could be consequences: you might have to leave early and seek employment in another country. Could you rely on the Public Orator's magnanimity? Well, of course you could. It is too soon to say goodbye, but not too soon to celebrate six years of devoted, enthusiastic and successful service. We thank you, and wish you equal success and good fortune in New York.

The appointment of Professor Louise Richardson is of course historic: it is the first time in our long history that we have chosen a Vice-Chancellor who has never lived in England. Like the most recent of our Vice-Chancellors to come from the humanities, Sir Colin Lucas, her academic field is the use of terror as a political instrument. Sir Colin studies the structure of the terror in France in the 1790s, but Professor Richardson knows all about the application of terror at the present day. We look forward to meeting her. This seems a good moment to mention another couple of firsts. In January Mrs Libby Lane of St Peter's was consecrated the first woman bishop in the Church of England, and last week Mrs Rachel Treweek of Wycliffe Hall became Bishop of Gloucester, the first woman diocesan in England and the first to sit in Parliament as a

Lord Spiritual. So Oxford can sometimes be the home of winning causes, after all.

But we cannot win everything. Dr Pietro Boselli, lecturer in mathematics at University College London, has recently given up the day job to concentrate on what had been his sideline as an underwear model. Several newspapers printed photographs of Dr Boselli wearing nothing above the waist, and, like Mr Miliband of Corpus when he sees a white van, I can feel only respect. An extensive investigation at the Mathematics Institute by the oratorical research team has concluded that we must reluctantly acknowledge an inferiority. Meanwhile, Dr Victoria Bateman, DPhil of this parish and now a Fellow of Caius, has celebrated something or other by having herself painted in the nude - warts and all, as you might say. Again, the papers have obliged with illustrations. Apparently this was empowering. There are those whom I would beg - beg - not to follow her example. Some things should not be allowed in a conservation area.

I turn now to Whitehall and Westminster - our Lower Thames campus. You will have noticed that this has been an uneventful year in British politics - as seen, that is, from the banks of the Isis. As exclusively predicted in last year's oration, the general election has given us an Oxonian Prime Minister, in his forties, who read PPE. We knew that whatever the British people decided, we should be still able to say: 'We won.' More dramatic than the election, in Oxonian terms, was the reshuffle that Mr Cameron of Brasenose executed last summer. The Foreign Office moved a hundred yards up the High, as Mr Hague of Magdalen made way for Mr Hammond of Univ. Education remained a North Oxford affair, as Ms Morgan of St Hugh's took over from Mr Gove of LMH. Since the election the four great offices of state have remained in Oxonian hands, but we have added the Lord Chancellorship to our portfolio: Mr Gove again. I remember Lord Hailsham of All Souls, when he was Lord Chancellor in the eighties, telling me with great satisfaction that he ranked in the Order of Precedence between the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and well above the Prime Minister. He was a man who appreciated such things.

Nine cabinet ministers are now Oxonians; when the cabinet meets, the minutes are taken by Sir Jeremy Heywood of Hertford, and Mr Johnson of Balliol drops in from time to time. So there are almost a dozen of us around the table. If I have counted right, the runners up are Cambridge, Edinburgh and Exeter Universities with two cabinet

ministers each - what our colleagues across the Atlantic call diversity hires. The chairman of the Conservative Party, Lord Feldman, was one of Mr Cameron's contemporaries at Brasenose, and he has now appointed as head of his policy unit Ms Camilla Cavendish, who read PPE at - good heavens - at Brasenose. I read, to my surprise, that there is also a Minister for Modern Slavery and Organised Crime. Call me a bleeding-heart liberal, but I'm rather in favour of a minister against these things. The minister in question is not an Oxonian; so we cannot be confident that the crime is efficiently organised and the slavery bang up to date.

We have infiltrated other parties too. As it happens, Mr Osborne is not the only finance minister in Europe to have been educated at St Paul's School and Oxford: he shares that distinction with the Greek government's Euclid Tsakalotos, who seems not to have been paying attention in his economics tutorials. He probably refused to produce an essay unless he was given an alpha beforehand. Back home a by-election in Kent last year returned Mr Mark Reckless, and for a few months we could claim half the UKIP parliamentary party for Oxford - Reckless of Christ Church elected to speak for Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells. But the University of East Anglia can now truthfully claim to have infinitely more UKIP MPs than ourselves, for we have no MPs and they have one. Meanwhile, the Labour party is electing a new leader. Last time Oxonians took first, second and third places; this time we are less well represented, and Ms Creagh of Pembroke has already dropped out. A college head emailed me to say, 'For the sake of the Creweian Oration it had better be Yvette Cooper.' One trusts that Mr Len McCluskey will bear it in mind.

Meanwhile, Council has waved its magic wand and turned us all into professors. As an Oxford dodo said, 'Everybody has won, and all must have prizes.' But some prizewinners are more equal than others and a few of the finest specimens are here, corralled below the Chancellor. At the coronation of Edward VII a pew was reserved for the ladies who had added interest and variety to the monarch's personal life; it was called 'the King's loose box'. Here, though, is a box not loose but stuffed with the tautest of intellects. I ask them to rise for your applause.

There are prizes for dons too. In the New Year Honours Sir John Bell was promoted to GBE, Jonathan Bate was made a Knight Bachelor and Marina Warner a Dame. Russell Foster and Tim Palmer received

the CBE and Cyrus Cooper and Hugh Williamson the OBE. Dickson Poon, benefactor of the Dickson Poon China Centre, was also knighted. In the Birthday Honours damehoods have been bestowed on Frances Ashcroft and Frances Cairncross, a knighthood on Stephen Nickell and the CBE on James Adams. The British Academy has elected as fellows Francesco Billari, Susanne Bobzien, Georgina Born, Susan Brigden, Gavin Flood, Henrietta Harrison, Cecilia Trifogli and Sarah Whatmore, and the Royal Society has picked Sir Rory Collins, Benjamin Davis, Alison Etheridge, Jane Langdale, Philip Maini, Gero Miesenböck, Jonathan Pila and Henry Snaith. We congratulate them all.

As always, some heads of societies are retiring. At Brasenose John Bowers will succeed Alan Bowman, at Jesus Sir Nigel Shadbolt will follow Lord Krebs, at LMH Frances Lannon will be followed by Alan Rusbridger, and at Green Templeton Denise Lievesley will take over from the Acting Principal, Ingrid Lunt. And as always, there are last farewells. I call to mind those friends and colleagues who have died in the past year, among whom are John Bayley, Fellow of St Catherine's, Brian Campbell, Fellow of Corpus Christi, Sir Raymond Carr, Warden of St Antony's, Sally Chilver, Principal of LMH, Carol Clark, Fellow of Balliol, Roger Cowley, Fellow of Wadham, Anna Davies, Fellow of Somerville, Sheppard Frere, Fellow of All Souls, David Goldey, Fellow of Lincoln, A H Halsey, Fellow of Nuffield, Henry Harris, Student of Christ Church, Gerald Harriss, Fellow of Magdalen, Catherine Hughes, Principal of Somerville, Peter Lewis, Fellow of All Souls, Terence Ranger, Fellow of St Antony's, Derek Robinson, Fellow of Magdalen, Bernard Rudden, Fellow of Brasenose, John Simopoulos, Fellow of St Catherine's, Jon Stallworthy, Fellow of Wolfson, Rosemary Stewart, Fellow of Templeton, William Sykes, Fellow of University, Sir Robert Wade-Gery, Fellow of All Souls, and Sir David Watson, Principal of Green Templeton. *Requiescant in pace et in aeternum luceat eis Dominus Illuminatio Mea.*

Sally Chilver died on 3 July last year, one month to the day short of her 100th birthday, the longest lived of anyone who has been head of an Oxford college. Margaret Wileman of LMH, Principal of Hughes Hall, Cambridge, died in September at the age of 106. No Oxbridge head has lived so long, maybe no Oxonian at all. And we have lost an even older friend: the black pine in the Botanic Garden, said to have inspired the trees in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, felled

after more than two centuries' existence - a reminder that even the longest life must have its end.

However, two of those whom I have commemorated live on in celluloid. John Bayley was portrayed in the film *Iris* by Jim Broadbent, who won an Oscar for it. But in *Accident* Raymond Carr was played by Dirk Bogarde. My predecessor as Public Orator left office a disappointed man, having failed in his long-held ambition to present Miss Sophia Loren for an honorary degree. Each one of us can muse meanwhile about which could best represent us. One hopes for George Clooney, but it might be Danny DeVito. But I am drifting too far into the realm of dreams and high fantasy, and they are the province of poetry. It is time for me to yield the floor: arise, Sir Geoffrey.

CREWEIAN ORATION 2015

The Professor of Poetry delivered the Creweian Oration 'in commemoration of the Benefactors of the University according to the intention of the Right Honourable Nathaniel, Lord Crewe, Bishop of Durham'.

MY LORD AND CHANCELLOR,

It cannot be thought altogether surprising that a Professor of Poetry, summoned to address this august assembly, should wish to give some consideration to the vexed relations between his ancient art, so often dismissed in public discourse as marginal and esoteric, and the pragmatics of national and local polity.

With this annual ceremony in which honorary degrees are conferred upon men and women of pre-eminent international distinction, the University reaffirms its faith in intrinsic value.

In the course of the past five years, in my lectures from this Chair, I have more than once expressed my belief that, although it is almost impossible to define, everyone of good intelligence and will is able to recognise intrinsic value when in its presence. I have no hesitation in stating that my belief is amply confirmed, in today's ceremony, by the University's choice of honorary graduands: now to be saluted, due process having been completed, as doctors *honoris causa*.

I derive my own understanding of the idea of intrinsic value from John Ruskin who, it is good to remember at such a time, was once Slade Professor of Fine Art in the University and also Honorary Student of Christ Church and Honorary Fellow of Corpus Christi.

Intrinsic value signifies real wealth that cannot be cashed, does not have realisable

cash-value. It is not 'illth', a word that Ruskin invented and that has now fallen for all too obvious reasons into desuetude. One reason is, perhaps, that, judged by the standards of literary and ethical criticism upheld in the University, it sounds a bit childish; but that contingency may be covered by Psalm 8 verse 2 and Matthew 21 verse 16.

When I hear lovers of the arts referred to as 'consumers of culture' or vulnerable clients and customers described as 'punters' I know that I am in the domain of illth.

As long ago as 1935 the American poet and critic R P Blackmur defined poetry as 'language so twisted and posed in a form that it not only expresses the matter in hand but adds to the stock of available reality'¹. Adding to the stock of available reality is, in its complex and difficult way, adding also to the stock of intrinsic value. The language of poetry may be 'twisted and posed' not only to provide decorative shape but also because it is subjected to immense strain.

Our current terms of literary approbation - 'accessible', 'hands-on', 'relevant' - seem trivial, indeed unworthy, by comparison.

With this model mini-oration, my Lord and Chancellor, I bring to an end my public duties in, but not my private affection for, the University. Very shortly I shall be standing by the roadside at Kidlington, my trade plates at my feet, a bottle of light ale protruding from my coat pocket, endeavouring to flag down some vehicle (I envisage a succession of small white transit vans) that appears to be heading in the general direction of Cambridge.

For the third and final time of asking in this noble theatre, and in your noble presence, I beg leave to hold my peace.

¹R P Blackmur, *Language as Gesture* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1954), p364